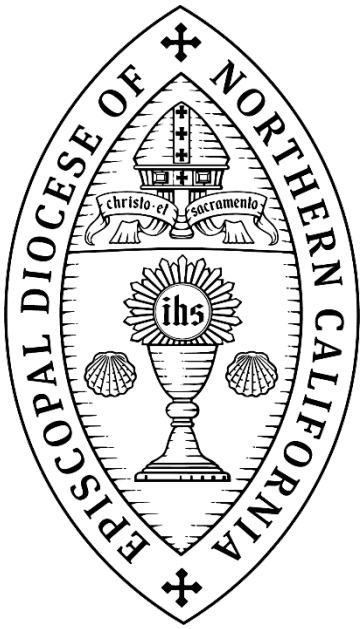

Handbook for Licensed Lay Ministry
Diocese of Northern California

PREFACE

The purpose of “The Handbook on Licensed Lay Ministry” is to provide a resource for clergy and congregations on calling, training, and setting apart lay ministers to serve in the worship of the Church.

The Book of Common Prayer defines four orders of ministers in the Church: lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons. Baptism into the Covenant Community of Jesus Christ is the primary prerequisite for any ministry in the Church. Ministry in the Church has usually involved some prior training, an examination of life and ability, and a setting apart, or an expression of approval, of the person by the people, the clergy, and the bishop.

Lay ministers are called in the Book of Common Prayer to “take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church” (p. 855). This handbook will assist congregations with the training and licensing of lay ministers who are called to serve through the worship of the Church.

Licensed Ministries:
Title III. Canon 4: Of Licensed Ministries

Sec. 1.

(a) A confirmed communicant in good standing, or in extraordinary circumstances, subject to guidelines established by the Bishop, a communicant in good standing, may be licensed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to serve as Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor or Catechist. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons and the duration of licenses shall be established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry.

(b) [relates to the Armed Forces]

Sec. 2.

(a) The Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith may request the Ecclesiastical Authority with jurisdiction to license persons within that congregation or other community of faith to exercise such ministries. The license shall be issued for a period of time to be determined under Canon III.4.1(a) and may be renewed. The license may be revoked by the Ecclesiastical Authority upon request of or upon notice to the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

(b) In renewing the license, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall consider the performance of the ministry by the person licensed, continuing education in the licensed area, and the endorsement of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith in which the person is serving.

(c) A person licensed in any Diocese under the provisions of this Canon may serve in another congregation or other community of faith in the same or another Diocese only at the invitation of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, and with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority in whose jurisdiction the service will occur.

Personal Qualities Desirable for ANY Licensed Minister: We look for a person who:

Demonstrates a commitment to follow Jesus Christ.
Approaches the Christian way as a continual opportunity for growth.
Lives by the Baptismal Covenant.
Is a respected member of the congregation (not necessarily a long-term member)
Is faithful in prayer and Bible study.
Is compassionate, committed, dedicated, sensitive, open, not rigid, interpersonally approachable, a good listener, willing to hear different

points of view.
Is faithful in worship.
Is willing to be a model of Christian living (with vulnerability and humility).
Has interpersonal skills in stressful situations.
Responds sensitively in pastoral situations.
Understands and appreciates the ministry of all baptized persons.
Is willing to serve as a member of a team and/or under appropriate supervision.

Pastoral Leader
Title III Canon 4 Section 3

A Pastoral Leader is a lay person authorized to exercise pastoral or administrative responsibility in a congregation under special circumstances, as defined by the Bishop.

Duties:

The Pastoral leader shares in identifying needs for pastoral care, responding to grief or crisis and coordinating efforts of a faith community to respond.

What a Pastoral Leader Should Know:

Prior to licensing, a Pastoral Leader shall be trained and found competent in the following subjects:

(a) The Holy Scriptures, contents and background;
(b) The Book of Common Prayer;
(c) Church History;
(d) The Church's Doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism;
(e) Parish Administration;
(f) Appropriate Canons;
(g) Pastoral Care;
(h) “Safe Church” and “Anti-Racism” Training.

It is expected that the Pastoral Leader would be competent in all the areas listed above to a degree appropriate to the local needs.

Practical Skills:

A Pastoral Leader needs to be able to discern pastoral needs, understand and maintain pastoral confidentiality;
Have excellent listening skills;
Understand the difference between a pastoral leader and counselor.

Process of Education and Training:

This category of licensed ministry can be used for a lay person in charge of a congregation which does not have the opportunity to secure a resident member of the clergy. The knowledge and training required for this licensed ministry is extensive but may vary with the local congregation. Consultation with the Bishop is necessary prior to the training of the applicant and introduction to the congregation. If the Pastoral Leader is to perform other licensed ministries, that person should be licensed for each of those ministries.

Licensing:

This specialized ministry will be licensed by the Bishop after consultation with the person requesting the license and the resident member of the clergy in charge of the congregation in which the Pastoral Leader will serve. The role of the Pastoral Leader in the congregation will be defined in writing by the Bishop, in collaboration with the person requesting the license and the local priest supporting the request.

Worship Leader
Title III, Canon 4, Sec. 4

A Worship Leader is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Duties:

A Worship Leader may publicly and regularly lead the Daily Offices of Morning Prayer, Order of Service for Noonday, Evening Prayer, and Compline. A Worship Leader may also lead other occasional services provided in the BCP.

What a Worship Leader Should Know:

General content of the Book of Common Prayer, the Bible, the Hymnal, and Church history.
How to use the lectionary in the BCP as well as the Revised Common Lectionary.
Where to find and how to utilize extra resources in the Book of Common Prayer such as prayers for individual use, catechism, etc.
General content of Lesser Feasts and Fasts and The Book of Occasional Services.
How to use the The Anglican Cycle of Prayer.
Basics of the liturgical seasons throughout the church year.

Practical Skills:

A Worship Leader needs to be able to read audibly, clearly, and with focus on meaning.

Put a service together, in accordance with BCP rubrics.

Work with acolytes and readers and with the customs of the congregation.

Process of Education and Training:

Education and training may take place locally, but may be supplemented with regional and ecumenical resources.

Ongoing education with feedback and ministry review is expected on a yearly basis.

Rectors, Vicars, Priests-in-Charge may train Worship Leaders.

A Worship Leader is expected to participate regularly in the life of the congregation where licensed.

Licensing:

License applications must be submitted to the Office of the Bishop by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. The Bishop's office will issue a license for 3 years, renewable upon the recommendation of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Recommended texts:

1. Hatchett, Marion. Commentary on the American Prayer Book. New York: Seabury Press, 1980.

2. Lee, Jeffrey. Opening the Prayer Book. The New Church's Teaching Series. Cambridge: Cowley Publications.

3. Mitchell, Leonel L. Praying Shapes Believing. Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985.

Preacher
Title III Canon 4 Sec. 5

A Preacher is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

It is expected that people called to the ministry of preaching will:

Be sure of and emphatic about God's love and forgiveness.
Be the kind of people who spur others to action.
Be open to God's leading in their lives and prayerful in their approach to this ministry.
Be intelligent, open-minded, and committed to lifelong learning.
Have a sense of humor about themselves and the congregation.
Have compassion for the oppressed and be tolerant of differences and diversities among people, yet not be afraid to confront in love.
Be innovative, but afraid neither of simplicity or the hard truths of the Gospel.

Duties:

Preach sermons in public worship.
Deliver sermons which are usually based on the assigned Biblical texts for the day and which are relevant to the personal daily life of the congregation.
Preach on a regular basis (though not necessarily frequently).

What a Preacher Should Know

Prior to licensing, the Preacher shall be trained, examined, and found competent in the following subjects:

(a). The Holy Scriptures, contents and background;
(b). The Book of Common Prayer and The Hymnal;
(c). The conduct of public worship;
(d). Use of the voice;
(e). Church History;
(f). Christian Ethics and Moral Theology;
(g). The Church's Doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of Faith, commonly called the Catechism;
(h). Appropriate Canons;
(i). Pastoral Care;
(j). Homiletics;
(k). Cultural variations and how those influence communication.

Practical skills for a Licensed Preacher:

Speech skills.
Composure, confidence, comfort in front of a group.
Group dynamics (able to respond to what is happening with people).
Knowledge of and sensitivity to the needs of the congregation.
Ability to relate Holy Scriptures to contemporary life situations using appropriate illustrations.
Ability to express one's self concisely.
Ability to be a good listener as well as a good speaker.
Ability to receive critique.

Process of Education and Training:

A Preacher-in-training will be given opportunities to preach and receive comments from others. A Preacher-in-training is expected to submit to the mentor a proposed draft of a sermon or an outline in draft form for comments on content. Audio or video tapes of preached sermons will be provided to the mentor for comments on content and style.

Licensed Preachers are expected to engage in continuing education, with accountability through the license renewal process. The following elements will be included in the training of a Licensed Preacher, who shall demonstrate competency in accordance with the Canons.

1. Use of lectionary, BCP, and Hymnal.
2. Understanding and preaching in accordance with the liturgical year.
3. Ways of crafting a homily or sermon and understanding basic sermon styles.
4. Use of language, including inclusiveness and God imagery/metaphors.
5. How to do exegesis of a Biblical text.
6. Use of voice and body language.
7. Use of resources.
8. Prayer and the preaching life.
9. Finding one's own unique voice.
10. Practice preaching

Recommended Texts:

Church's Teaching Series- highly recommended for review in various areas of competency.

Craddock, Fred. Preaching. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1985, 1990.

Edwards, O. C. Elements of Homiletics. New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1982.

Lowry, Eugene L. The Homiletical Plot. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.

Schlafer, David. Surviving the Sermon: A Guide to Preaching for Those Who Have to Listen. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publishing, 1992.

Schlafer, David. Your Way With God’s Word: Discovering Your Distinctive Preaching Voice. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publishing, 1995.

Taylor, Barbara Brown. The Preaching Life. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publishing, 1993.

Wilson, Paul Scott. Four Pages of the Sermon. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1999.

Eucharistic Minister
Title III, Canon 4, Sec. 6

A Eucharistic Minister is a lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Minister shall act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Duties:

The duty of a Eucharistic Minister is to assist in the distribution of the elements in a Celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

What a Eucharistic Minister should know:

The basic content of the Book of Common Prayer.
The meaning of the Eucharist.
The structure of the Eucharistic liturgies used in the congregation where licensed.
Practical skills needed in the distribution of the elements.
How to respond with dignity to situations that may arise during administration.
The names and functions of liturgical vessels, linens, and furnishings.
What to do with consecrated elements not used in a service.

Practical Skills:

A eucharistic minister should have skills in:

The process of how the service is organized and implemented;
Technicalities of using the chalice and purificator;
Appropriate words when administering the chalice;
Knowledge of how to proceed when someone does not want to receive the cup;
Maintain a sense of dignity and reverence when serving at the altar.

Process of Education and Training:

The education and training of Eucharistic Ministers may be provided by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith, by a Deacon.

Licensing:

License applications must be submitted to the Office of the Bishop by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of

faith. The Bishop’s office will issue a license for 3 years, renewable upon the recommendation of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Eucharistic Visitor
Title III, Canon 4, Sec. 7:

A Eucharistic Visitor is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner* following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration. A Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Duties:

Eucharistic Visitors may take the Consecrated Elements to persons in accordance with the above-cited Canon. Eucharistic Visitors are to be supervised by a Deacon if there is one in the congregation, or by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. Once licensed, the Eucharistic Visitor shall be scheduled by the Deacon, if there is one, or person exercising supervision, or other person as designated by the Deacon or person exercising supervision. The Eucharistic Visitor shall take the consecrated elements to members of the congregation in which the Eucharistic Visitor is licensed. It is not appropriate for the Eucharistic Visitor to take the consecrated elements to persons who are not members of the congregation unless specifically directed by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation. If the Eucharistic Visitor is unable, due to unexpected circumstances, to deliver the consecrated elements within the time frame specified above, the Eucharistic Visitor shall return the consecrated elements to the altar or to the Member of the Clergy in charge by noon on the following day.

What a Eucharistic Visitor Should Know:

The basic content of the Book of Common Prayer.
The theology and meaning of the Eucharist.
The structure of the Eucharistic liturgies used in the congregation where licensed.
Practical skills needed in the distribution of the elements.
How to respond with dignity to situations that may arise during administration.
The names and functions of liturgical vessels, linens, and furnishings.
What to do with consecrated elements not used in a service.
The nature of the church as community and the need for each member to be included in it.
The principles and concerns of ministry with the sick, the aging, and the infirm.
The origin and development of Eucharistic Visitors and the relevant canons.
The history of this ministry.
The role of the Eucharistic Visitor.
The service for Communion under Special Circumstances in the BCP.
How to use the lectionary.

Practical matters related to visiting a person at home or in another setting.
Basic matters of Pastoral Care.

Practical Skills:

A eucharistic visitor should:

Examine their own attitudes and feelings about those they are visiting prior to the meeting;
An understanding of suffering (especially for the sick and shut in) and an ability to show compassion and empathy;
An understanding of the power of a “ministry of presence”.

Process of Education and Training:

Eucharistic Visitors may be trained by a Deacon, Rector, or other designated trainers.

Safe Church training in accordance with the guidelines established by the Episcopal Church.

Recommended text:

Ely, Beth Wickenberg. A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers. Morehouse, 1991.

Licensing:

License applications must be submitted to the Office of the Bishop by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. The application must be signed by the trainer. The Bishop’s office will issue a license for 3 years. The license is renewable upon the recommendation of the Deacon (if there be one), and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. The Eucharistic Visitor shall make a written report weekly or monthly to the supervising Deacon, or Member of the Clergy in Charge or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation, or other community of faith, using a form provided by the supervisor. Continuing education is expected at the discretion of the supervising Deacon or the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation, or other community of faith.

Catechist
Title III, Canon 4, Sec. 8:

A Catechist is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Duties:

In addition to what is stated in the Canon cited above, a Catechist may prepare families and sponsors for infants and young children to be baptized; may prepare children for first communion; may use sermon time on occasional Sundays to present sections of the Catechism, with appropriate commentary.

What a Catechist Should Know:

The Holy Scriptures, contents and background;
The Book of Common Prayer and The Hymnal;
Church History;
The Church's Doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism;
Methods of Catechesis.
The background and customs of the Episcopal Church in Northern California and Congregation or Faith Community.
The connection between Scripture and theology and everyday life.
Cultural differences and ways to teach in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

Practical Skills for a Catechist:

A Catechist is expected to be able to:

Encourage questions and sharing.
Teach different age groups.
Organize and present materials.
Find and use appropriate resources.
Work and function under supervision and as a member of a team.
Adapt to the learning styles and needs of individuals.

Process of Education and Training for Catechists:

Catechists will be trained locally, regionally, or in sponsored workshops.
Safe Church Training is expected.

Licensing:

License applications must be submitted to the Office of the Bishop by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. The Bishop's office will issue a license for 3 years. Continuing education is expected. The license is renewable upon the recommendation of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Evangelism Facilitator
Title III, Canon 4, Section 9

An Evangelist is a lay person who presents the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that people are led to receive Christ as Savior and follow Christ as Lord in the fellowship of the Church. An Evangelist assists with the community's ministry of evangelism in partnership with the Presbyter or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation, or as directed by the Bishop.

Call:

A call to serve as an evangelist shall be discerned and affirmed in accordance with the guidelines for discernment.

Duties

Recognizes the face of Jesus in every individual and seeks to listen and have dialogue with those individuals as they move along their spiritual paths to a knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

Understands that evangelism is the responsibility of every believer and thrives on encouraging others to live out this responsibility.

Practices the qualities of a good coach – patience, compassion, curiosity, openness and trust. Good coaches listen deeply, ask engaging questions, and reflect back what they hear, and in the process develop a respectful and meaningful relationship with individuals.

Meets people where they are, like Jesus met the woman at the well (John 4:7-42) or when Jesus broke bread with the sinners and tax collectors (Mark 2:14-16.)

Exhibits courage, wisdom and energy, inspiring others to be transformed by the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

Encourages and supports others in their ministry of evangelism, through prayer, or by providing spiritual practices and practical tools to his/her fellow church members to use when talking with others.

Able to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ with clarity and conviction.

Welcomes the opportunity to build relationships with people with little or no introduction.

Seeks out opportunities to be in conversation with unbelievers about spiritual matters.

Rectors, vicars and priests-in-charge may recommend confirmed members of their congregation in good standing to be licensed Evangelists.

What an Evangelist should know;

Holy Scriptures, interpretation, contents and background
The Baptismal Covenant and its application to the ministry of all Christians
The Church's doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of Faith, commonly called the Catechism
Individual and communal prayer
An overview of Church history including current events in The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion

Process of Education and Training:

The Parish Rector may provide information, education and training for an individual to become an Evangelist in that parish.

Licensing:

Diocesan Evangelist licenses shall be valid for a period of three years. These licenses may be renewed with approval of their rector, vicar or priest-in-charge of their parish for another three-year period.